

**THE RATS - An excerpt between Alec, David and Sandra.** ALEC is “a young man of twenty-eight or nine, extravagant, very elegant, amusing and inclined to be spiteful. He has a very artificial manner and is dressed in the height of fashion.” Alec has just arrived at a friend’s empty apartment, claiming to have been invited for drinks, but is hiding a secret about his true nefarious motives for being there. **Page 1/2**

**DAVID.** Alec!

**ALEC.** Hullo, David. Hullo, Sandra. Darlings, how devastating. We three seem to be much too early for the party.

**SANDRA.** *(Relieved.)* There is a party, then? We were just wondering.

**ALEC.** Yes, it doesn’t look much like it, does it? No canapés, no baked meats, no olives. I suppose the party is here? The Torrances aren’t giving it somewhere else, are they? How long have you two been here?

**SANDRA.** *(Quickly.)* Oh, I came about five minutes ago and David has just arrived.

**ALEC.** Oh, I see. You didn’t come together.

**SANDRA & DAVID.** No.

*(ALEC looks at them. There is a pause.)*

**SANDRA.** Pat rang you, did she?

**ALEC.** No, it was Michael as a matter of fact. Of course, he is rather a vague chap. I don’t know him all that well. He just said would I roll along here to drinks six-thirty p.m. onwards. So here I am.

**DAVID.** All dressed up!

**ALEC.** Well, I’ve been to the garden party. My dear, the people nowadays!

*(He looks around.)*

Anyway, I gathered this was to be quite a do.

**DAVID.** Did Michael say so?

**ALEC.** No, he just said “drinks” but there are ways of saying things.

**DAVID.** *(Decisively.)* Well, it seems to be quite clear what’s happened. The Torrances are giving a party but they’re giving it somewhere else and either they thought we knew where they were giving it or they forgot to say.

**ALEC.** It’s rather queer though, isn’t it? I mean, that they should have forgotten to say so to all three of us.

**SANDRA.** Somebody – it was Jennifer Brice, as a matter of fact, said that the Torrances were abroad. I didn’t believe her, but now I wonder.

**ALEC.** *(Happily.)* My dears, how intriguing. Now wait a minute, let me work it all out. The Torrances have gone away. Somebody else, we don’t know who, has asked us three to come here.

*(He turns to DAVID.)*

But why? Exciting, isn’t it? Quite like one of those mysteries in books. Perhaps they’ll expect us to hunt round for a clue, you know, that’ll send us on to the next place. Yes.

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*(He looks round the room.)*

It's odd isn't it, but this whole flat looks rather cruel to me. So bare and cold. These four walls that hold you in and just the minimum of necessities to live in it. What a horrible place to be shut up in if you couldn't get out.

**DAVID.** It's a perfectly ordinary modern flat, Alec. Now don't start thinking up things.

**ALEC.** You're so hearty, David. You won't let me have any pleasant imaginings.